



the legacy land conservancy
Journal

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Protected: Renner's Corner

By Kyra VandeBunte



The Renner family raises sheep and grows hay and soy beans on their 66-acre farm. To protect this land for the future, they donated a conservation agreement to Legacy Land Conservancy.

At the tail-end of 2009, Legacy Land Conservancy successfully closed 6 projects protecting 290 acres of natural areas and farmland. In this newsletter, you'll read about two of these projects: *Renner's Corner* (page 1) and *Hathaway Woods* (page 2).

The Renner's Corner farm, located in Bridgewater Township on Austin Road near Manchester, is a beautiful,

idyllic place. A historic stone farmhouse overlooks gently rolling hills where hay and soybeans grow. On another 10-acre field bordered by oak forest and seasonal wetlands, sheep contentedly graze.

David Renner spent much of his life on the land farming and exploring the picturesque property. The land has been a special place to the Renner family since 1967, when Renner acquired the land. "Raising four children who loved to roam the fields, swamp, and woods, and spending time watching the wildlife kindles many memories," said Renner.

Renner's son David Scott Renner continues to live and farm on the property, adding to the long chain of farmers who have worked the land since 1836. At its start in 1836, the farm was 219 acres. Today, the farm is smaller, at 66 acres, with 41 acres actively farmed.

To preserve the remaining portion of this historic and productive farmland, David and Marilyn Renner worked with the Legacy Land Conservancy to donate a conservation

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OUR MISSION: The Legacy Land Conservancy protects natural areas and farmland, here where you live.

Far Country



By Susan Lackey
Executive Director

Every spring, **Mary Hathaway** and her family celebrate the season with a trillium party at their **Scio Township woods**. This year, the family will have special reason to celebrate, since this woods has been protected – forever. And while the deer will continue to munch the blossoms, many flowers will survive, and future generations of the Hathaway family will be able to point to that



with pride.

While the trilliums mark the Hathaways' official beginning of spring, each of us has our own marker. The impatient among us declare it done when the birdsong begins

to change in February. For some, it's the faint green of newly emerging leaves. For me, it's the first time I see the top of a daffodil peeking through the snow. Two things are clear, however. First, in Michigan at least, solar calendar notwithstanding, it's rarely March 20. Second, it always comes.

Spring teases us, though. In early February, Suzie and I walked out of a meeting one day, paused, and smiled. You could smell something very green in the air...it was mother nature opening the door just a bit to remind us that winter wouldn't last forever.

As with so many things in nature, I think this gives us a clue about how to live our lives. Dark times don't last forever. Like Mrs. Hathaway's trillium, better times are sure to emerge. Just as the Hathaways protected their land forever (and not just during trillium season), we – all of us – need to continue the work of protecting important lands for the future. With your help, this work continues – over 300 acres in 2009; another 100 since the beginning of 2010. Farms, woods, and wetlands that sustain us in every season. Thank you!

Notes From The Land

Voters say yes!

In November 2009, Webster Township voters overwhelmingly approved the renewal of the township's Farmland and Open Space Preservation millage. Proposal D passed with 60% of the vote (1021 to 671). The 0.5 mills millage will run from 2010 through 2014, and will be used for "preserving farmland, open space, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and protect drinking water sources and the water quality of rivers and streams." This is great news for local land protection!

Welcome, Erika!

Erika Taylor has been part of the Conservancy team as Operations Manager for nearly a year now, so it's about time we officially welcome her in the Journal.



Erika came to Michigan in 2001 from the San Francisco bay area, where she worked in nonprofit management for 15 years. Erika has an undergraduate degree in natural resource management and an MBA in finance and accounting. Kayaking, mountain biking, disc golf, and gardening are her passions. She lives in Ann Arbor near the river with her husband, two kids, and a cat named Joe. Welcome, Erika!

Volunteer Awards

Thank you to the following wonderful Legacy Land Conservancy volunteers who went above & beyond in 2009:

- **The Mosquito's Pick Award – Margaret Engle, Lucie Audette & Harvey Michaels**, for photo-monitoring in the wetlands during the high season for bugs, and for taking on an additional monitoring site.
- **Volunteer Service with a Smile Award – Penny & John Owen**, for helping out as Volunteer Ambassadors (and in other capacities too) whenever they can, and always being such friendly faces when they're out in the community with the Conservancy's display table.
- **If It's Outside Then I'm In Award – David Beck**, for helping out in every single volunteer capacity that can be done in the out of doors.
- **Volunteer Leadership Award – Katie Cooney-Schofield & Pete Schermerhorn**, for much needed volunteer coordination.
- **In Tune with the Land Award – Barry Lonik & Billy King**, for great barn concerts.
- **Volunteer of the Year Award – Jim Tolen**, for taking such great care of Sharon Hills Nature Preserve over the past many years.

The Legacy Land Conservancy

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The Legacy Land Conservancy Staff: Susan A. Lackey, Suzie Heiney, Kyra VandeBunte, Dana Wright, and Erika Taylor

Editor: Suzie Heiney

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Journal

Land Trust Alliance
Together, conserving the places you love





On a misty winter day, Renner's Corner is quiet, awaiting the bustle of spring. Southwest Washtenaw County maintains a thriving agricultural district. One of Legacy Land Conservancy's top conservation priorities is protecting fertile farmlands, particularly those that grow local food.

agreement on the land. They decided to protect the property after talking to conservation agreement donors Bob Ludwig and his daughter Connie Ludwig, who protected their properties with the Conservancy in 2007. As Renner said, "Their enthusiasm rubbed off."

Now protected by a permanent conservation agreement, the scenic qualities of the 66-acre farm will be preserved, while the land's strong legacy of farming can continue long into the future.

The 66 acres protected by the Renner Family is one of 6 new land protection projects completed by Legacy Land Conservancy in December 2009. Thank you to these landowners, the many volunteers, and the supporters like you who make it all possible.

Protecting farms for the future

Protecting farmland is one of Legacy Land Conservancy's top conservation priorities. Farming has changed drastically in the last forty years and will continue to evolve in the years to come. Securing the land itself in contiguous blocks will ensure that this region's proud agricultural heritage will continue, adapting to changes in the marketplace.

The Legacy Land Conservancy welcomes farmers with questions about land protection to give us a call. We'll be happy to discuss your situation with you, since every situation and every piece of land is unique.

Across the Board

By Rocky Ward
Board of Trustees



My message is a letter of support for the work of the Legacy Land Conservancy. My admiration extends back to the early 1970s when its predecessor organization, the Washtenaw Land Conservancy, was created. The goals of the non-profit organization were to preserve and protect our local land resources. These goals have remained the centerpiece of the now-named Legacy Land Conservancy.

This note is directed to people associated with the Conservancy, to thank all of you who have supported the Conservancy through placing your land in conservation easements, through your generous donations, and through time and activity to support the Conservancy's goals and staff members. You are the people who have made these efforts notable. Many of you have remained relatively anonymous but you are the heroes and heroines behind the headlines and news releases.

I also thank the Conservancy's staff. Hours upon hours are devoted to personal contact with landowners and field work, maintaining financial accountability and fund raising, and the seemingly unlimited amount of time devoted to a wide-ranging group of administrative duties.

And my comments would be remiss if the volunteers and people serving on special committees were not acknowledged for their contributions. Thank you!

It has been about two years since I was given the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors. The invitation was likely based on my decades teaching land planning. My years of love for the land extend back to the late 1950s and early 1960s when I worked on a large livestock farm in western Ohio.

It was natural for me to inherit an appreciation for the land resource that many people take for granted or seldom take the time to observe. It is important for individuals to reconnect with the beauty of nature. A

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Protection Coming Soon in Waterloo

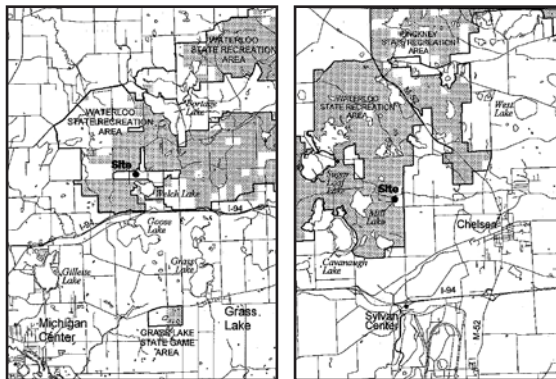
As mentioned in past issues of the Journal, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund has awarded the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) \$2,500,000 for acquisitions to the Waterloo Recreation Area. Because this grant doesn't include funding for the required appraisals, the Conservancy has stepped up to pay those necessary costs.

This work has resulted in two pending acquisitions, one for 72 acres (Washtenaw County, Sylvan Township) and one for 37 acres (Jackson County, Leoni Township). Both of these properties are directly adjacent to existing Waterloo lands. They include a mix of woodland, wetland, and meadow. Once acquired, they will be open to the public for all to enjoy.

Waterloo Recreation Area is the largest state park in southern Michigan. Visited by 600,000 people a year, it includes over 20,000 acres of protected public land. The recreation area boasts 59 miles of trails for hiking and walking, a visitor's center with year round exhibits and programs, 11 fishing lakes and 8 boat launches, and more. It is home to rare habitats that harbor threatened and endangered species such as the Blanchard's cricket frog (*Acris crepitans blanchardi*), Kirtland's snake (*Clonophins kirtlandii*), and Mitchell's satyr butterfly (*Neonympha m. mitchelli*).

Because of its importance recreationally and ecologically, the Legacy Land Conservancy has made protecting Waterloo, and filling in the unprotected gaps, a top conservation priority.

You can help! We want to be ready to jump when the next Waterloo opportunity comes along. To do so, we have a goal of raising \$40,000 for land protection in Waterloo. Thanks to the generosity of the members of the Waterloo Hunt Club, we're already making great progress against this goal. But to meet the goal, we need everyone who loves wild natural lands to step up. Please consider making a gift to Legacy Land Conservancy to protect Waterloo: Simply put "Waterloo Fund" in the memo line; it's tax deductible. Your gift can help save this amazing wild place.



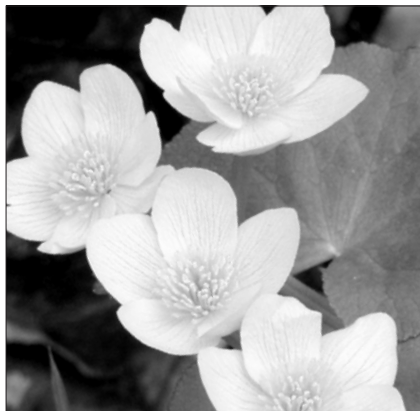
Above: Spanning over 20,000 acres, the Waterloo Recreation Area is a fantastic natural and recreational resource for all residents of southern Michigan.

At Left: These two locator maps show the locations of the two pending properties to be acquired to expand the Waterloo Recreation Area.

Across the Board, continued from page 3

walk in the woods and the sounds and sights of wildlife are treasures. Too many people assume it will always be there.

Legacy Land Conservancy is working daily to make the continuation of our rural environments a legacy that promotes an element of the history of our country and a legacy for future generations. Thank you for joining in this effort.



Stay connected!

- Sign up for the monthly **eUpdate** at legacylandconservancy.org
- Become a Fan on **Facebook**
- Get the latest news on our blog, landconservancy.wordpress.com

Volunteer Profile – Penny Owen

By Suzie Heiney

Penny Owen has been a volunteer with Legacy Land Conservancy since 2006. As a volunteer in the Volunteer Ambassador program, Penny has helped take our table-top display to community events such as Earth Day. She hands out information, talks with passersby, and gets new people to sign up as volunteers. I caught up with her by phone to ask her about her experiences.

SH: What prompted you to first volunteer with Legacy Land Conservancy?

PO: I've always been interested in everything related to outdoor preservation. I like to see wild things stay wild. You see subdivisions popping up in your favorite nature area and it's disheartening, so I always have an eye out for groups who help protect wild lands. I like the local nature of it, too. It's right here, right in my own community, my own little corner of the world. You can actually go and visit these places – they're close to home, and you can actually go tromp around and visit and say, "I helped with this!"

I first volunteered because I met you, actually, and your energy & enthusiasm made a difference. When someone is committed to the cause, it draws you in –

you want to be that person. When I retired, I had a little extra time, and I was excited about having the chance to spread the word, and I could help.

SH: What do you enjoy about it?

PO: As a former teacher, I like to talk with people and chitchat, and I like to convince people to do the things I think are important. Anytime you have a chance to talk with something you really care about it's a great feeling. It's like that little girl at one event that gave her only dollar of allowance to the Conservancy, instead of spending it on a knick-knack or a snack – How cool!

SH: Did you have any initial concerns about staffing the display?

PO: I was a little worried someone would ask me a question I couldn't answer. I didn't want to come off looking like I didn't know what I was talking about!

But what was helpful is that there is a tub full of information, with a cheat-sheet and lots of brochures. Sometimes people ask things you don't know the answers to, but it's not a big deal. It's ok to say, "I don't know, but here's a number to call, or I can take your contact info and someone will get in touch."

It's more important to be



Photo taken by CD Photo Group

enthusiastic about what we're doing, and how people can get involved, than to be able to spew a bunch of facts.

SH: What would you say to someone who's thinking of getting involved?

PO: I'd say you need to do it, just once. It's well worth it. It's so much fun you're going to want to do more! Even if you're shy, you can connect with people in a non-threatening way. Try it once. You'll be surprised.



You can help!

We still need a few more people – perhaps you! Volunteer Ambassadors work in pairs to set up the table display, hand out flyers, and talk with passersby. We provide you all the training you'll need. If you're a friendly person who likes the Conservancy's mission of protecting land, this is a great role for you!

Why is it important? There are lots of great community events, but nobody can be everywhere all the time. You can help get the Conservancy's mission out to more events, by helping staff the display 2 or 3 times a year for about 2 to 4 hours. When more people learn about it, more local lands will be protected!

Interested? Contact us today! (734) 302-5263, info@legacylandconservancy.org

Forever Fund – Goal Reached!

Thank you to everyone who chipped in to help with the Forever Fund Challenge. We are pleased to announce that thanks to your support, the Forever Fund goal of \$500,000 was successfully reached by December 31, 2009.

A local foundation, which prefers to remain unnamed, had offered to match all gifts to the Conservancy's Forever Fund and Endowment, dollar for dollar, up to \$250,000. Upon hearing of this challenge, you all answered this call, and you have earned the full match!

The Forever Fund was established by the Conservancy to protect and defend lands forever. Conservation isn't over when the documents are signed – it's just beginning. By agreeing to protect a property, the Conservancy assumes perpetual stewardship responsibility for each protected property. This responsibility includes: annual monitoring of the property to ensure that the agreement is being followed; maintaining and improving the properties held as nature preserves; securing liability insurance; and enforcing and defending the property from violation. To meet this eternal commitment, the



Conservancy must be ready to take action when needed. Your gifts to the Forever Fund make the difference in being prepared to address potential future violations.

Most importantly, your support of the Forever Fund means that the land you have helped protect today will stay protected forever. Thank you.

Stewardship Restoring Ecosystem Health & Flexibility

By Dana Wright

My past positions in stewarding the environment by mainly removing “bad” plants brought up the question for me: What is good stewardship, and how does that relate to global warming and evolution? Being a big picture person, I like to zoom out and make sense of the why before becoming engaged in the how.

During seemingly endless hours of sitting on an overturned old City of Ann Arbor recycling bucket in the rains of early spring, pulling bag after bag of the invasive garlic mustard, I couldn't help but wonder what good we might be doing by ridding the 140 acres of Marshall Nature Area of garlic mustard...if we were even successful? As local environments change, so does the ecology, or the association between all the plants and animals that live

there. With so many question marks about what might come, how could we think we had an answer with pulling up garlic mustard, which isn't really a “bad” plant, but a plant out of place?

Because there was so much garlic mustard, I had the luxury of thinking about this question for a long time. What I came up with was this: We are not trying to return our current state of affairs into some supposedly idyllic situation that existed before humans were regularly transporting living things all over the planet; we are restoring local health in preparation for change. Hopefully the “health” of local diversity, which is eradicated by the presence of invasive plants, will provide enough flexibility in the ecology for the system to adjust.

Now in working with Legacy Land Conservancy, I have also been able to



The delicate chandelier flowers of native meadow rue.

think in these terms with preserving local farms as well as our water and natural areas. By keeping as much of our needs (water, food, and shelter) as local as possible, hopefully we can provide enough flexibility to be able to adjust.

Calendar

Spring will soon be here! For details and location information on any of these events: (734) 302-5263 www.legacylandconservancy.org

Signs of Spring Hike

March 20, 1-3pm

Been cooped up inside too much lately? Join us at Creekshead Nature Preserve's beautiful beech-maple forest. Please dress for the weather. Bring the whole family!

Shop to Save Local Lands!

March 25, 8am-10pm
Today only, Whole Foods Market on Washtenaw will donate 5% of the day's net sales to Legacy Land Conservancy to support local land protection. Your shopping can help! Whole Foods Ann Arbor, 3135 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor.

Spring workday at the Johnson Preserve

April 7, 10am-1pm

Join us for the first volunteer stewardship workday of spring. Help us get this new preserve in shape for the season! Meet at the preserve entrance just south of Lillie Park South off of Platt Rd.

Landowner Information Session: Farm the Best, Conserve the Rest

April 7, 5:30-7:30pm
Learn about the financial benefits of protecting water quality, saving soil, and providing wildlife habitat. Meet at 983 S. Dancer Road near Mill Creek to see a streambank restoration project first-hand, then continue to Twp Hall (11508 Pleasant Lake Rd in Manchester) at 6:30pm. Co-sponsored with HRWC, ECT, M-DEQ, NRCS.

Local Foods, Local Lands

Dinner at Grange

April 19, 5-10pm

In honor of Earth Day, join Legacy Land Conservancy at Grange Kitchen & Bar for a fundraiser for local lands. Dining options include a full-course prix fixe dinner on the main level, and a bar menu upstairs. All proceeds benefit Legacy Land Conservancy. At Grange Kitchen & Bar, 118 W. Liberty in Ann Arbor. Reservations recommended: (734) 995-2107.



Garlic mustard workday at the Beckwith Preserve

April 24, 1pm-4pm

April is the best time to harvest garlic mustard for eating. Help us remove an invasive, and take some home to eat! We'll supply the recipes. Meet just east of downtown Stockbridge on the north side of Maple Dr.

Identifying Woodland Wildflowers at Creekshead Preserve

May 2, 1pm-4pm

Woodland flowers are part of the ephemeral beauty of spring. At this workshop we'll cover background on plant identification, an introduction to "indicator species", and a discussion of threats to wildflower areas. Participants then hit the trail to see what they can find and identify. All attendees will receive a handy flower identification book to take home. Meet us near the intersection of Curtis Rd. and Spring Creek Ln. north of Ann Arbor.

Garlic Mustard workday at Sharon Hills Preserve

May 8, 11am-2pm

Enjoy the woods, help make them a better place, and collect dinner all in one go! Join us in pulling the invasive, but tasty, garlic mustard out of the nicest areas of this preserve to make room for the native wildflowers. Bring a lunch for a midday picnic. We'll meet in the parking lot off of Sharon Hollow Rd., south of Tolen Dr. and head out from there.

World Environment Day Workday at the Johnson Preserve

June 5, 10am-1pm

Let's celebrate by working together to get Johnson looking great for the trail opening. We will be sprucing up the trail and installing our new sign. Volunteers are encouraged to stick around for the party and show off their hard work. Meet at the preserve entrance just south of Lillie Park South on Platt Rd.

Johnson Preserve Trail Opening

June 5, 1pm

Over 25 volunteers during five workdays have put in time and muscle power to make this trail. Starting at the bike trail along Platt Rd. and our new sign, the trail traverses wheat fields, goes into an oak-hickory forest, and loops around a button bush swamp. Join us in celebrating its completion! Meet at the preserve entrance just south of Lillie Park South on Platt Rd.

You make it possible!

Your gift to the **Legacy Land Conservancy** protects nature and farmland, here where you live.

Yes! I'll protect local lands for future generations.

Enclosed is my gift of \$_____. Please use this gift for:

The Conservancy's Greatest Needs

Farmland Fund **Waterloo Fund**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Please contact me about:

- Upcoming events Becoming a volunteer
 Planned giving Protecting my land

Please make checks payable to **Legacy Land Conservancy**, or make a secure credit card donation by calling (734) 302-5263 or online at www.legacylandconservancy.org.

Thank you!



LEGACY
Land Conservancy

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LEGACY Land Conservancy

*Protecting and Preserving
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Formerly Washtenaw Land Trust —
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RECYCLED PAPER

Historic Farm for a New Generation

Michael Vestergaard knew long time Lodi Township supervisor and farmer Erwin Frederick. He never guessed he'd someday be acquiring his (Mr. Frederick's) Wagner Road farm from his heirs, with an eye toward retaining it in agricultural production for a new era.

For a number of years, Michael and his wife, Hope, had searched for a farm where they could raise humanely treated livestock for consumers. When they first saw the for sale sign on the old Frederick farm, they knew this could be the place, if only the price were right. Realtor Charlie Koenn, himself a former farmer, working with Mr. Frederick's heirs, saw an opportunity to keep this beautiful land in farming – forever, help a new farm family establish themselves in the community, and allow the heirs to realize the value of the land left to them by their grandfather. Surely, the key to this 'everyone wins' solution was the sale of the development rights, which would allow a below market price for the sale of the land.

Thanks to the Ann Arbor Greenbelt, Lodi Township and Legacy Land Conservancy, Hope and Michael's dream is set to become a reality, while Erwin Frederick's family knows that their family legacy is honored. All three groups, aided by the generosity of the Frederick's heirs and Mr. Koenn, have come together to protect this highly

visible farm parcel, But we need your help. Legacy Land Conservancy must raise \$42,000 to meet its commitment to this project. All gifts to the Farmland Fund between now and June 30 will help protect this farm.

